

[By Bob Kinzel](#)

(Host) Congressman Peter Welch is leading a bi-partisan effort to convince President Obama to withdraw a large number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan in the near future.

Welch says the killing of Osama bin laden gives the President an opportunity to shift U.S. policy from 'nation building' to 'counter terrorism'.

VPR's Bob Kinzel reports:

(Kinzel) Welch has been a long time critic of the Obama Administration's decision to send as many as 100 thousand troops to Afghanistan.

Now he's heading up a bi partisan move to try to persuade the President to immediately begin

withdrawing troops following the death of Osama bin laden last week:

(Welch) "I think it's allowed us to step back and now start asking the question as to whether nation building is the right way to go or this counter terrorism approach intelligence, special forces is the better and more sustainable way to go. One of the major initiatives after going into Afghanistan was to get Osama bin laden that's happened and I think that now there's just an openness to having a review."

(Kinzel) Welch says there are a very limited number of al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan and he thinks U.S troop strength should reflect this reality:

(Welch) "The policy that we have of nation building in my view is not sustainable and I think it's not particularly going to be effective when you've got a decentralized, dispersed threat. So that's why there is a I think growing bi-partisan view that moving towards this so called counter terrorism, intelligence and special operations is a better and more effective way and more sustainable way to protect America."

(Kinzel) President Obama has proposed a time table that calls for withdrawing some troops from Afghanistan in July. Welch is hoping that the President will realize that there's growing support in Congress to bring a lot of troops home this summer:

(Welch) "What I understand is the President has indicated that he can pursue his time table that did anticipate drawing down troops shortly and this may give him some encouragement to try to make a bigger drawn down."

(Kinzel) Welch says lawmakers could also challenge legislation that funds the war in Afghanistan if the current effort to bring troops home isn't successful.

For VPR News, I'm Bob Kinzel in Montpelier.